

VZCZCXRO8819  
OO RUEHROV  
DE RUEHDS #0853/01 0911018  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
O 311018Z MAR 08  
FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0077  
INFO RUCNIAD/IGAD COLLECTIVE  
RUEHNR/AMEMBASSY NAIROBI 3436  
RUEKDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC  
RHMFISS/CJTF HOA  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC  
RHMFISS/HQ USAFRICOM STUTTGART GE  
RHMFISS/HQ USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL  
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ADDIS ABABA 000853

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

STATE FOR S/CT PHIPPS, AF/RSA ORTH, BITTRICK

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/29/2018

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [ET](#) [KE](#)

SUBJECT: STAFFDEL YOUNG DISCUSSES SOMALIA AND SUDAN WITH  
ABDETA DRIBSSA

REF: GONZALES-AF/RSA E-MAIL 03/11/08

Classified By: CDA Deborah Malac. Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

Summary

-----  
11. (C) Ethiopia seeks USD 17 million in funding in order to train 10,000 Somali Transitional Federal Government (TFG) police, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) Chief of the Minister's Cabinet told StaffDel Young on March 24. Abdeta expressed confidence that the military situation is improving in Somalia. Stressing that the Ogaden is not another Darfur, Abdeta said that Ethiopia's counterinsurgency operations have gone "quite well" and have also influenced Somalia positively by showing that Ethiopian forces are "not joking." Abdeta urged the United States to pay greater attention to the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in Sudan, which he called "the heart of the matter." Ethiopia wants a unified Sudan, rather than a two-state solution with an "Arab state" in the north with which Ethiopia would have no leverage, Abdeta said. End Summary.

12. (C) MFA Chief of the Minister's Cabinet Abdeta Dribssa met with StaffDel Young on March 24 to discuss Somalia, Sudan and other matters of mutual concern between the United States and the Ethiopian government. Mark Young, Professional Staff Member (PSM) of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence (HPSCI), Jamal Ware, HPSCI PSM, Michael Kuiken, Senate Armed Services Committee PSM, Bernard Ingold, Legislative Counsel, U.S. Army, and Deputy Pol-Econ Chief participated in the meeting.

Somalia: Ethiopia Keen On TFG Police Training

-----  
13. (C) Abdeta pressed the StaffDel to ensure that Washington gives full consideration to the Ethiopian government's USD 17 million request for funds for training 10,000 Somali Transitional Federal Government (TFG) police. To underscore that the Ethiopian proposal is both modest and efficient, Abdeta said that the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) is requesting USD 817 million from the United Nations for "capacity-building" in Somalia. He said that international funding for the Ethiopian proposal will create confidence that mutual interests in Somalia's stability can be met. Ethiopia has a good track record of training TFG

security elements, Abdeta said, and the discipline and integrity of Ethiopian-trained forces are evident when they return to Somalia. Even if Ethiopia does not receive assistance it will press on with its training program, Abdeta said, cautioning however that without funding Ethiopia would be "more sensitive" about international cooperation in the future.

¶4. (C) Abdeta expressed confidence that the military situation is improving in Somalia, claiming that on March 23, ENDF forces moved between Mogadishu and Merca, supposedly an insurgent corridor, without encountering a single insurgent. Abdeta noted that the number of Ethiopian troops in Somalia is about 2,500. Abdeta added that Ethiopia had learned that four of five top leaders in the Alliance for the Re-liberation of Somalia (ARS) had convened in Khartoum, but Abdeta did not say why they might have done so. As he has said in the past, Abdeta reiterated that, while the United States advised against an Ethiopian National Defense Forces (ENDF) invasion of Somalia, subsequently the United States and Ethiopia's governments have cooperated well, especially on matters of intelligence. Abdeta underscored that the value of United States overall political support for Ethiopia's actions has been "incalculable," adding that the costs - politically and economically - to Ethiopia without that support would have been significantly higher. The United States "set the tone for the international community," Abdeta said, noting that the world now sees that Ethiopia "did the right thing."

Sudan: The CPA is the Heart of the Matter

-----  
ADDIS ABAB 00000853 002 OF 002

¶5. (C) Noting that Ethiopia has offered five attack helicopters for the United Nations Mission in Darfur (UNAMID), in addition to troops, Abdeta emphasized that "Darfur does not determine Sudan's fate - the (Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA)) is the heart of the matter." Urging that more attention be paid to the CPA, Abdeta said that Ethiopia believes a unified Sudan where south Sudan has a greater say in governance and affairs of the state serves Ethiopia's interests best. "We don't want to see a separate Arab state in the north where we don't have any leverage," Abdeta explained. Abdeta noted that Ethiopian peacekeeping troops have greatly benefited from African Contingency Operations Training and Assistance (ACOTA). Ethiopian non-governmental organizations, such as the Center for Policy and Dialogue, currently provide capacity-building for security forces and other institutions in southern Sudan, Abdeta said.

"The Ogaden Is Not Another Darfur"

-----  
¶6. (C) The situation in Ethiopia's Somalia region, and the Ogaden in particular, has been "over-inflated" by the media and the diplomatic corps and "is not another Darfur," Abdeta said. If American citizens rather than Chinese nationals had been killed by the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF) in April 2007, Abdeta posited, perceptions of the nature of the conflict in the Ogaden would be much different. Abdeta said that the Ethiopian government tried in the past to work with the ONLF and he argued that "this government has been the most friendly highland government ever, allowing relative autonomy and political freedoms in the Somali Region up to and including secession." However, the ONLF rejected cooperation and chose to accept support from the Eritrean government, Abdeta said. "But the Ethiopian government has dealt with the ONLF in a very nice way," Abdeta added, noting that Ethiopia's counterinsurgency operations "will have a (positive) effect even in Somalia. People now see we are not joking."

Whither AFRICOM?

-----  
¶7. (C) Abdeta said that he misinterpreted President Bush's remarks that AFRICOM would remain headquartered in Stuttgart for now to mean that AFRICOM had been effectively terminated.

When the StaffDel clarified, Abdeta said that clear communication with African partners is essential to building broad-based support for the command. African Union permanent representatives based in Ethiopia should "feel comfortable with AFRICOM," Abdeta said, noting that "it is important for the United States to understand the nuances and many anxieties in Africa" regarding the standing up of a new combatant command. COMMENT: It is unclear whether Abdeta was being provocative or genuinely misunderstood the President's remarks. If the latter, it is evident that work must continue in Ethiopia to highlight for the government the opportunities provided for African partners by the new command. END COMMENT.

¶8. (U) The StaffDel did not have the opportunity to clear this cable before departing Ethiopia.

MALAC